

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-23, and 25-27 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 6, 9, 11, 14, 16, 20, and 25-26 are amended to more clearly define the invention and claim 24 is canceled. Claims 1, 6, 11, 14, and 16-20 are independent.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicants note that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

This Amendment amends independent claims 11, 14, and 16 to delete the feature of the supporting section being adapted to support a section of each holder such that the supported section is adapted to be rotatably supported in relation to the supporting section. Original claims 11, 14, and 16 did not recite this feature. However, Examiner Prunner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten to incorporate the features of independent claim 1 from which they originally depended. This feature was originally recited by independent claim 1, therefore, claims 11, 14, and 16 are allowable without reciting this feature.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 1, 4-5, 11-19, and 21-23 are allowed. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 8-9, and 24-27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. This Amendment amends independent claim 20 to incorporate the features recited by allowable claim 24 and cancels claim 24, thereby placing claims 20 and

25-27 into condition for allowance. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable.

Claims 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Ham (U.S. Patent No. 6,412,988 B1). Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sansevero (U.S. Patent No. 4,533,271). Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ham in view of Sansevero.

Applicants enclose a verified English language translation of the priority documents, thereby perfecting the claim to priority of the present application under 35 C.F.R. 1.55 to the filing dates of those priority documents which are December 28, 2000, January 12, 2001, and May 30, 2001. The filing date of the Ham reference is June 7, 2001. Therefore, the Ham reference is not prior art and may not be applied against the present application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 4-23, and 25-27, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

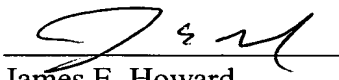
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DOCKET NO. No. 49

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 12/29/09


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